

# NCES DOVE UPDATE

DATA ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE NCES TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL (TRP) ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION



## NEW CLASSIFICATION OF POSTSECONDARY FIELDS

NCES' DOVE program is charged with reporting on vocational/technical education at the postsecondary as well as the secondary level. Researchers use the National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) and the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) to describe trends in the faculty who teach and students who major in postsecondary vocational/technical fields. In the past, most NCES analyses adhered to the federal definition of vocational/technical education as leading to careers requiring less than a bachelor's degree and focused on trends in these less-than-4-year program areas.

With new postsecondary data recently available, including NSOPF:1999 and NPSAS:2000, the DOVE TRP recommended at the last annual meeting that NCES broaden its analyses to cover career-related education at both the subbaccalaureate and baccalaureate levels. A separate meeting of postsecondary experts in November of 2002 confirmed the utility and importance of taking this broader approach.

Consequently, NCES—in collaboration with MPR Associates—developed a new taxonomy for classifying postsecondary teaching fields and majors based on recommendations by the convened panel of postsecondary experts; a review of other postsecondary taxonomies; a review of community college course catalogs; analysis of NPSAS data on students' majors and degree expectations; analysis of IPEDS data on postsecondary completions; and analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data on the educational composition of workers in 800 occupational fields.

This new taxonomy divides the postsecondary fields broadly into academic education and career-related education. Academic education includes the traditional liberal arts, which are intended primarily to provide general knowledge and develop general intellectual capacities. In contrast, career-related education is intended to provide and develop professional, technical, or vocational knowledge and skills.

For analyses at the subbaccalaureate level, the taxonomy then subdivides career-related education into vocational/technical and non-vocational/technical fields, where vocational/technical programs lead to jobs typically requiring less than a bachelor's degree. Thus, the taxonomy provides flexibility to examine and compare postsecondary faculty and students in a variety of ways.

An upcoming NCES *Issue Brief*, "Academic, Career, and Vocational Education at the Postsecondary Level," will describe postsecondary undergraduate enrollments—particularly subbaccalaureate enrollments—using the new taxonomy.

## NEW POSTSECONDARY FIELDS TAXONOMY

### I. Academic Education

Fine/Performing Arts <sup>1</sup>	Mathematics
Humanities	Science
Interdisciplinary Studies	Social Sciences
Letters and English	

### II. Career-Related Education

#### A. Vocational/Technical Programs

Agriculture/Natural Resources  
Business/Marketing  
Communications Technologies  
Computer Sciences  
Design  
Early Childhood Education  
Engineering/Architecture Technologies  
Health Care  
Legal/Social/Protective Services<sup>2</sup>  
Personal/Consumer Services  
Teacher Aide/Assistant  
Trade and Industry

#### B. Other Career-Related Programs

Communications <sup>3</sup>	Engineering/Architecture <sup>5</sup>
Criminal Justice	Parks/Recreation/Fitness
Education <sup>4</sup>	Social Work

<sup>1</sup>Not including Design.

<sup>2</sup>Not including Parks/Recreation/Fitness and Criminal Justice.

<sup>3</sup>Not including Communications Technologies.

<sup>4</sup>Not including Teacher Aide/Assistant and Early Childhood Education.

<sup>5</sup>Not including related technologies.



## TRP MEETING ON JULY 17-18!

All TRP members should have been notified that the next DOVE TRP meeting will be held at One Washington Circle Hotel in Washington DC on Thursday–Friday July 17–18, 2003. Tentatively, the meeting will be held from 8:30–4:30 on the 17th and 8:00–3:00 on the 18th. We will distribute an agenda by the end of May. Please contact our TRP Project Assistant, Caren Baker, at (510) 849-4942 or [cbaker@mprinc.com](mailto:cbaker@mprinc.com) to confirm whether you will be able to attend. She can also answer any travel-related questions you may have. Hotel rooms may fill up quickly, so please contact us soon if you will be traveling from out of town.